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## Executive Summary

*Asian Reflections on the American Landscape: Identifying and Interpreting Asian Heritage highlights the cultural imprint of Asian groups on the built environment of the United States. It is part of an effort by the National Park Service and its partners to increase the awareness of the historic places associated with the nation's cultural and ethnic groups that have been identified, documented, recognized, and interpreted and to lay the groundwork for the identification of additional historic places. Many of the examples in this publication are drawn from National Park Service cultural resources programs that are carried out in partnership with other government agencies and private organizations.*

Documented Asian contact with the North American continent dates back to at least to the middle of the 16th century. Asian ethnic groups participated in the early settlement of the United States, contributed to the economic development of the American West, and played a role in the desegregation of public schools in the United States in the 20th century. Aspects of Asian cultures influence our language, our palette, and our landscape. Studies of Asian American culture began in earnest during the middle of the 20th century. Scholars are increasingly documenting the role of Asians in American cultural life and the impact of discriminatory legislation on Asian communities in the United States.

This examination of Asian cultures in the United States occurs as the number of people of Asian descent is rapidly increasing. Census data indicates the Asian population has grown 48 percent since the 1990 census, as compared to 13 percent for the general population. However, Asian groups have a heterogeneity that makes the all-inclusive administrative construct of “Asian American” deceiving. Older established communities such as Chinese and Japanese Americans are making way for newer communities of Vietnamese and Cambodian Americans. The

Pacific Islander population is considered part of this group. This constantly evolving demographic is making its influence felt in all aspects of American life.

The publication is intended to support the efforts of historic preservation and cultural resource stewardship professionals and organizations within their communities. It is intended for the general reader, one without specific knowledge of Asian or Asian American cultural heritage. This document includes:

- An introductory essay that summarizes Asian cultural heritage in the United States
- An annotated list of historic properties related to Asian cultural heritage that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places listings, designated as National Historic Landmarks, and documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, all programs of the National Park Service
- Examples of historic places that interpret aspects of Asian heritage for the public benefit
- A list of historic properties documented and/or recognized by National Park Service cultural resources programs, arranged by program and state
- A bibliography containing well-known and accessible publications on the topic

*Asian Reflection on the American Landscape: Identifying and Interpreting Asian Heritage* is the second publication by the National Park Service using this methodology to highlight the imprint of diverse groups on the built environment of the United States. The first volume, *African Reflection on the American Landscape: Identifying and Interpreting Africanisms*, was published in 2003.

## Acknowledgments

*This publication is the second volume in a series of publications that highlights the impact of the nation's cultural and ethnic groups on the American built environment. The first volume in this series was African Reflections on the American Landscape: Identifying and Interpreting Africanisms, which was published in 2003. The African Reflections publication provided a successful model for examining diverse cultural groups and their impact upon the built environment. It was produced to encourage preservation professionals to seek additional examples in their own communities. This volume similarly provides examples of Asian heritage and lays the groundwork for additional exploration of this topic.*

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